

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 00149 140629Z

15

ACTION H-03

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TAGS: OREP (JOHNSTON, SENATOR BENNETT J.)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL JOHNSTON JAN 10-15

REF: (A) STATE 248452; (B) JIDDA 134; (C) JIDDA 5697

1. SENATOR JOHNSTON MADE A GOOD IMPRESSION ON SAUDI OFFICIALS DURING HIS VISIT TO JIDDA JAN 10-15. SAUDIS LIKED HIS POLITE YET OPEN AND MAN-TO-MAN APPROACH AS WELL AS HIS WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO THE ARAB POINT OF VIEW -- EVEN IF HE WOULD AFTERWARDS EXPRESS HIS ADDITIONAL VIEWS OR RESERVATIONS. THE SENATOR SEEMED TO BELIEVE A SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS LAY IN SATISFYING THE NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE MAJOR PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT. THE TERRITORIAL IRREDENTISM OF EGYPT, HE THOUGHT, WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT. THE SENATOR SEEMED HOPEFUL THAT NEGOTIATED SOLUTIONS COULD BE FOUND TO SYRIA'S DEMANDS FOR GOLAN, AND TO THE PROBLEMS OF JERUSALEM AND THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES. TO ALL OF HIS ARAB LISTENERS THE SENATOR STRESSED THAT WHILE THE UNITED STATES FULLY SUPPORTED THE SECURITY OF THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, THE ARABS WOULD NOT FIND THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH PREPARED TO UNCONDITIONALLY SUPPORT ISRAEL'S CLAIMS TO TERRITORY IF A SETTLEMENT WAS IN

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SIGHT THAT LINKED ARAB ASSURANCE OF ISRAEL'S SECURITY

TOGETHER WITH ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE BULK OF THE TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967.

2. THE SENATOR'S SCHEDULE LARGELY CONFORMED WITH OUTLINE (REF C). ON FRIDAY EVENING, JAN 11, SENATOR DINED WITH AMBASSADOR AKINS; MININTERIOR PRINCE FAHD'S PERSONAL ASSISTANT MAHMOUD MALHAS; FORMER JIDDA MAYOR; WAHEEB BIN ZAGHER; DEPMINPETROLEUM DR. FADL QABBANI; AND DCM. DISCUSSION WAS EASY AND RELAXED; SENATOR EMPHASIZED TO ARAB GUESTS THAT ARAB IMAGE IN U.S. WOULD BE ENORMOUSLY HELPED IF ARAB STATES WOULD METE OUT SWIFT AND CONDIGN PUNISHMENT TO THOSE TERRORISTS ON THEIR HANDS IN KUWAIT, KHARTOUM AND ELSEWHERE. ON JANUARY 12, SENATOR CALLED KING FAISAL, MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OMAR SAQQAF, AND MINISTER HISHAM NAZER (CHAIRMAN CENTRAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION). EXCHANGE WITH KING COVERED FAMILIAR GROUND, BUT HIS MAJESTY MADE THE POINT THAT PEACE COULD BE REACHED IF ISRAEL WITHDREW TO ITS PRE-JUNE 1967 TERRITORIES, AND OFFERED REPATRIATION OR COMPENSATION TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES. MINISTER HISHAM NAZER EXPRESSED TO SENATOR HOPE THAT U.S. FIRMS WOULD SHOW MORE COMPETITIVENESS AND INITIATIVE THAN THEY HAD IN PAST AND PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY IN BIDS FOR PROJECTS IN SAUDI ARABIA'S NEW FIVE-YEAR PLAN. PLAN WOULD BE CAPITALIZED AT FIFTY-FIVE BILLION DOLLARS, AND INCLUDED SIGNIFICANT FUNDS FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION, DESALTING, SCHOOLING, AND RESEARCH INTO ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY. MINSTATE SAQQAF WAS IN DESPONDENT MOOD AND EMPHASIZED THAT MIDDLE EAST PEACE DEPENDED ON USG MAINTAINING MOMENTUM OF EARLY KISSINGER VISITS AND OF SHOWING SOME FURTHER RESULTS SOON. SAQQAF ADDED THAT EVEN IF DISENGAGEMENT WERE TO TAKE PLACE, FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD THE FINAL SOLUTION SHOULD BE ANTICIPATED; OTHERWISE, SYRIA AND EGYPT MIGHT BOTH RESUME HOSTILITIES.

3. CODEL'S TRIP TO DHAHRAN AND ABU DHABI HAD TO BE CANCELLED SINCE SENATOR CAME DOWN WITH THE FLU IN COURSE OF LUNCH FOR CODEL GIVEN BY ARAMCO'S LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE TONY GROH, AND WHICH ATTENDED ALSO BY GOVERNOR OF PETROMIN DR. ABDUL HADI TAHER AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DCM HORAN. CODEL DEPARTED DIRECT FOR BEIRUT 1600 HOURS LOCAL JANUARY 13.
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